with a seriousness that was as terrifying as it breathing hard. A smile hovered over Yeux-Yeux-gris turned to him with that little hauteur out of themselves; was stupid. When I looked into his dogged eyes gris's lips; already a red disk on Gervais's shirt he assumed occasionally.

"Messicurs, is it Lucas you mean to kill?"

the very last name he would have said."

This was Greek to me; I had mentioned no

names but Maitre Jacques's and my own. And he was their friend.
"Messieurs." I said, "if it is my name that does

not please you, why. I can say for it that if it is not very high-sounding, at least it is an honest one and has ever been held so down where we "And that is at St. Quentin," said Yeux-gris.

"Yes, monsieur. My father, Anton Broux, is Master of the Forest to the Duke of St. Quentin." He started and Gervais cried out:

"Voila! who is the fool now?"
My nerves, which had grown tranquil since Yeux-gris came to my rescue, quivered anew. The common man started at the very word St. Quentin, and the masters started when I named the duke. Was it he whom they had spoken of as monsieur? Who and what were they? There was more in this than I had thought at first. It was no longer a mere question of my liberty. I was all eyes and ears for whatever information I

Yeux-gris spoke to me for the first time grave-

This is not a time when folks take pleasure

trips to Paris. What brought you?"
"I used to be monsieur's page down at St. Quentin," I answered, deeming the straight truth best "When we learned that he was in Paris my father sent me up to him. I reached the city last night and lay at the Amour de Dieu. This morning I went to the duke's hotel, but the guard would not let me in. Then when monsieur drove out I tried to get speech with him, but he would have none

The bitterness I felt over my rebuff must have been in my voice and face, for Gervais spoke ab-

"And do you hate him for that?"
"Nay," said I. churlishly enough. "It is his to do as he chooses. But I hate the Comte de Mar

for striking me a foul blow." "The Comte de Mar!" exclaimed Youx-gris. "His son."

"He has no son."

"But he has, monsieur. The Comte de"——
"He is dead," sald Yeux-gris.

"Why, we knew naught"--- I was beginning, when Gervais broke in:
"You say the fellow's honest when he tells such

tales as this! He saw the Comte de Mar!"—
"I thought it must be he," I protested. "A
coung man who sat by monsieur's side, elegant

"That is Lucas, that is his secretary, declared Yeux-gris, as who should say, "That is his scul-

Gerva and him and a mandad then shrugged his shoulder and demanded of me:

"What next?"

"I came away angry."
"And walked all the way here to risk your life in a haunted house? Pardieu! too plain a lie."
"Oh, I would have done the like; we none of us fear ghosts in the daytime," said Yeux-gris.

"You may believe him; I am no such fool. He has been caught in two lies; first the Bethunes, then the Comte de Mar. He is a clumsy spy; they might have found a better one. Not but what that touch about ill-treatment at monsieur's hand was well thought of. That was monsieur's suggestion, I warrant, for the boy has talked like a dolt else.'

"I am no liar," I cried hotly. "Ask Jacques whether he did not tell me about the Bethunes. It is his lie, not mine. I did not know the Comte de Mar was dead, and this Lucas of yours is handsome enough for a count. I came here, as I told you, in curiosity concerning Maitre Jacques's story. I had no idea of seeing you or any living dieu!

wited. Well, I forgive it and invite you to stay. You shall be my valet."

"You have a man; surely I should have one too. And I understand the services of M. Felix are not engaged.

here and brushes my clothes. Marry, they need Easily, with grace, he had disposed of the mat-

"Monsieur, I shall do nothing of the kind." blackguard
"What!" he cried, as if the clothes brush itself you like."
"You ar

had risen in rebellion, "what! you will not?"

"No." said I. "And why not?" he demanded, plainly thinking Because I know you are against the Duke of

St. Quentin Whatever they had thought me neither expected "I am no spy or sneak," said I. "It is true I

bame here by chance; it is true monsieur turned me off this morning. But I was born on his land I was like to die for it. For Gervais whipped

out his sword and sprang for me. I thought I gris, rising and picking up his sword, which he you treat me strangely like a foe." saw Yeux-gris's out too when Gervals struck me sheathed. "That is very well said. For if you did "We are friends." over the head with his sword hilt. The rest was not feel like promising it, why, I should have to "I am your friend, since it is in your cause that been for Lucas."

## U.—Rapiers and a Vow.

length it dawned on my dull brain that swords with his bloody arm in its sling, he was as

were crossing. I opened my eyes again then. Gervais. The latter was almost trampling on me, Yeux-gris had pressed him so close to the wall. the two, and I found myself mistaken. I dropped had never set foot in the Rue Coupejarrets. He Yeux-gris had pressed him so close to the wall. Then he forced his way out, and they drove each gratitude. other round in a circle till the room seemed to "Aha," said Yeux-gris, "what think you now of

spin once more. I crawled out of the way and watched them, be-don't large will be way and watched the way a wildered, absorbed. I had more reason to thrill over the contest than the mere excellence of it- I can ever pay. If you were any man's enemy but "He shall not go. You know well, cousin, you he. which was great—since I was the cause of the my duke's I would serve you on my knees. But will be no gladder than I when that knave is dead. duel, and my'very life, belike, hung on its issue. I was born on the duke's land and I cannot be dis- But I will not have Felix Broux suffer because he They were both admirable swordsmen, yet it loyal. You may kill me yourself if you like."

was clear from the first where the palm lay. Any- "No," he answered gravely, "that is not my ling nimbler, lighter, easier than the sword-play metier." Yeux-gris I never hope to see in this imperfect Gervais laughed.

to hear. For Gervals was taking the situation world. The heavier adversary was hot, angry, "Make me that offer and I accept."

With a scrowless that was an ferrifying as it breathing hard. A simle hovered over Years, was a signal, when it all dogsed eyes give a signal give arrained to him with that little headers of control of the merchants of the control of the merchants of the

bewilderment was so great that the words came into the closet and boilted the door upon him. Hitle alley to the north of the Hotel St. Quentin. "I will settle with him later. But you are right. Do you know your way to the hotel? Well, then, We cannot send him."

you are to go down the passageway between the house and M. de Portreuse's garden-you cannot

At last I saw the door unlocked. Yeux-gris even returned to me my knife. "Au revolr, messieurs." Gervais, sullen to the last, vouchsafed no answer, but Yeux-gris called out cheerily, "Au UI .- H Matter of Life and Death. OTHING in life can be so sweet as freedom after captivity, safety after danger. When I gained the open street once more and breathed the open air, no one molesting or troubling me, I could have sung with joy. I fairly hugged myself for my cleverness in getting out of my plight. As for the combat I was furthering, my only doubt about that was lest the skulking Lucas should not prove good sword enough to give trouble to M. Gervals. It was very far from my wish that he should come out of the attempt unscatched.

But as I went along and had more time to ponder the matter other doubts forced themselves into my reluctant mind. Put it as I pleased, the affair smacked too much of secrecy to be quite savory. It was curious, to say the least, that an honest encounter should require so much plotting. Also, Lucas, coward and rascal though be might be, was monsieur's man, doing monsieur's errand, and for me to mix myself up in a plot against him was scarcely in keeping with my vanuted loyalty to the house of St. Quentin. My friend Gervais's quarrel might be just; his manner of procedure, even, might be just, and yet I have no right to take part in it. And yet monsieur had signified plainly enough that he was no longer my patron. For my birth's sake I might never work against him, but I was free to do whatever else I chose. Monsieur himself had made it necessary for me to take another master, and assuredly I owed something to Yeux-gils. I had reason to feel confidence in his honor; surely I might reckon that he would not be in the affair unless it were honest. Lucas was like enough a scoundrel of whom monsieur would be

the Duke of St. Quentin," He kissed the cross and

flung the chain back over my neck.

was sworn, so there was no use worrying about it. I had taken oath and could not draw back. I hurried along to the rendezvous, only pausing one moment at the street corner to buy sausages hot from the brazier, which I crammed into my mouth as I ran. But after all there was no need of haste; the little arch, when I panted up to it. was all deserted

well rid. And lastly and finally and above all I

No better place for a tryst could have been found in the heart of busy Paris. Only the one door opened into the alley; M. de Portreuse's high garden wall, forming the other side of the passage, was unbroken by a gate, and no curious eyes from the house could look into the deep arch and see the narrow, nailstudded door at the back where I awaited the rat-faced Martin.

I stood there long, first on one foot and then on the other, fearful every moment lest some one of monsieur's true men hould ome along to demand my business. No one appeared, either foe or friend, for so long that I began to think Yeuxgris had tricked me and sent me here on a fool's errand, when, all at once, a low voice said close

to my ear: "What seek you here?"
I jumped on finding at my side a little, pale, sharp-faced man-the man of the vision. He had dipped through the door so suddenly and quietly that I was once more tempted to take him for a ghost. He eyed me for a bare second; then his

eyes dropped before mine, "I am come to learn the hour," said I.

's cret mission."
"Monsieur," I said. "I should be glad to leave "Hush!" he cried. "Hush! Don't say names

He looked at me sharply for another brief in-He stared at me with an air more of bewilder- stant before his eyes slunk away from mine. You should have a password.

ughter rang out.
"They gave me none. They told me to say I "Bravo, Felix! I am proud of you! That is came from the shuttered house in the Rue Coupe-'How came you into this business?"

By a back window." He gave me another suspicious glance, but mak-

ing nothing by it he rejoined:
"Eh blen, I trust you. I will tell you." He clutched my arm and drew me to the back "Monsieur, I shall be pleased either way."

He clutched my arm and drew me to the back
I know not how he relished the answer, for of the arch, where the afternoon shadows were

already gathered. "What have you for me?" he demanded.

"Nothing. What should I have?"

"He promised me ten pistoles to-day. He did

\* not give them to you?" "I tell you, no. You are a thicf! You have them!"

"Well," Gervais consented, "I leave it to you. He said I should have ten pistoles when I let him know the hour."
"I cannot mend that. It lies between you and

rade only. M. Gervais and I will interrupt monsieur's interests not endangered, yet at the little journey." "Very good, monsieur. And I?" and be defiled. You cannot go hand and glove "You will meet our spy and learn the hour of with villains and remain an honest man. I re-"As you choose. But M. Gervais carries a long



## "Monsieur," I cried, half choked, "there is a plot-a vile plot to murder you!"

"And Lucas?"

"Yes, monsieur," I said. He regarded me curiously.

The duke's life seems much to you.

"Oh, Lucas!" I said. "I know nothing of him.

Gervais kicked him into fuller consciousness.

"Get up, hound. It is time to meet Martin."

'You dare not send that man, Gervals."

"Why, monsieur, I am a Broux."

Gervais was bending over the man. With an lence Etienne? Time was when you were touchy abrupt laugh he called out: "Killed him, par- on that score."

He spoke dieu! He has come off cheap." "Time never was when I did not love courage." set himself

ory. I had no idea of seeing you or any living an. It is the truth, monstear."

"I believe you," Yeux-gris answered. "You have nonest face. You came into my house uninfeed. Well, I forgive it and invite you to shall be my valet."

"He shall be nobody's valet," Gervais cried.

"He shall be nobody's valet," Gervais cried.

"Time was when you were touchy abrupt laugh he called out: "Killed him, pardieu! He has come off cheap."

"Time was when you were touchy abrupt laugh he called out: "Killed him, pardieu! He has come off cheap."

"Time never was when I did not love courage."

"Time was when you were touchy abrupt laugh he called out: "Killed him, pardieu! He has come off cheap."

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"Time never was when I did not love courage."

"Time never was when I did not love courage."

"Time never was when I did not love courage."

"Time never was when I did not love courage."

"Time never was when I did not love courage."

"Time never was when I did not love courage."

"To do not think he is lying." Yeux-gris and the chimes ring five?"

"Time never was when I did not love courage."

"Time never was when I did not love courage."

"Time never was when I did not love courage."

"The raised the fellow's limp head, and we saw the was a courage."

"The shall be my valet."

"He shall be my valet."

"He shall be my valet."

"Go, no need for disguise. I am come from that seere."

"Oh, no never in the kine series. They better when the whith a gruthen the house."

"Oh, no never in the held not in the kine series."

"Oh no thinks

if I could. I will kill Pontou now if you say the "Nay," answered the other, faintly; "help me." me. Did you lie?"

"You gave your word you would leave him to He answered me slowly:
"We do not love him. I

sneak"—

"As I would take M. de Paris if I chose," responded Yeux-gris with a cold hauteur that smacked more of a court than of this shabby room. He added lightly again:

"You think him a spy; I do not. But in any case he must not blab of us. Therefore he steep and brushes my clothes."

"Nay," answered the other, faintly; "help me." me. Did you lie?"

"I do leave him to you!" Gervals thundered. "I would slit his impudent throat. But since you tween us bathed the cut, bandaged it with strips love him you may have him to eat out of your would slit his impudent throat. But since you torn from a shirt and made a sling of a scarf. The plate and sleep in your bosom. I will put up with would slit his impudent throat. But since you torn from a shirt and made a sling of a scarf. The plate and sleep in your bosom. I will put up with would slit his impudent throat. But since you torn from a shirt and made a sling of a scarf. The plate and sleep in your bosom. I will put up with would slit his impudent throat. But since you should slit his impudent throat

"You will not bear me malice for that poltroon's will say he found us living in my house. What work, Etienne?" Gervais asked, more humbly than harm? We are no felons. Let him say it." I ever thought to hear him speak. "That was a "And put Lucas on his guard?" returned Gerfoul cut, but it was no fault of mine. I am no vais. He was angry, yet, he spoke with evident blackguard: I fight fair. I will kill the knave if attempt at restraint. "Put Lucas on the trail?

"You are ungrateful, Gervais; he saved you and he will never let us catch him." when you needed saving." Yeux-gris laughed.
"Faith! let him live. I forgive him. You will pay me for my hurt by yielding me Felix."

Gervais looked at me. While we had worked wheel. We will take no risks till Lucas is shent.

side by side over Yeux-gris he seemed to have The boy shall be held prisoner. And after-forgotten that he was my enemy. But now all the ward" old suspicion and dislike came into his face again. "I will come myself and let him out," said Ger-However, he answered:

me off this morning. But I was born on his land and I am no traitor. I will not be valet or hench man for either of you if I die for it."

"Aye, you would have been the victor had it not f glanced at my protector, not liking to think been for Pontou. You shall do what you like with of that moment, whenever it might be, "afterman for either of you if I die for it."

"Aye, you would have been the victor had it not f glanced at my protector, not liking to think been for Pontou. You shall do what you like with of that moment, whenever it might be, "afterman for either of you if I die for it." "Now that is well said, Gervais," returned Yeux-

begin over again with my left hand."

"Oh, I give you the boy," Gervals repeated brother-you cannot deny it." some wine.

CAME to my senses slowly, to hear loud, angry voices. As I opened my eyes and stirred the room reeled from me and all was blank again. Awhile after I grew aware of a clashing of steel. I lay won-deplay the theorem was blank what it was and what had a laugh. Withal he had been the power to win you gour lady."

I could not but wonder at Yeux-gris, at his gay-I stood at your shoulder in the Montluc affair—you cannot deny that. I have been your ally, what it was and what had been the power to win you your lady."

A shadow fell over Yeux-gris's open face. dering thickly what it was and why it had constant champion of my innocence, even to be going on while my head ached so, till at drawing his sword on his cousin for me. Now, length it dawned on my dull brain that swords with his bloody arm in its sling, he was as my Gervais."

A shadow fell over Yeux-gris's open face, "That task needs a greater power than yours, my Gervais." nair and careless as ever. I had been stupid He-regarded Gervals with a rueful smile, his

They were fighting each other, Yeux-gris and enough to imagine the big Gervais the leader of thoughts of a sudden as far away from me as if I

being my valet?'

"I never meant that foul trick. It was no thought of mine. I would have turned the blade "That Felix Broux may pass out." "That Felix Broux may pass out."
"By heaven, he shall not!"

He is wary as a cat. Let him get wind of us here

but he did not; he merely said: "And Lucas?"

vais, and laughed.

"My cousin, are we friends or foes? For faith!

I am here. I have stood at your shoulder like a At this moment a long groan came from the end rather sullenly, turning away to pour himself "No." Gervais answered, "you stood my friend -my one friend in that house-as I was yours. vais, they looked venomous.

Gervais's shoulder: "It's beyond you, cousin."

Gervals brought him back to the point.
"Well, I've done what I could for you. But you he will betray you. Look at his face." don't help me when you let loose a spy to warn

"He shall swear on the cross!

"What would you? We must send."

eried out:

"But you are enemies to the Duke of St. Quenthis house with my skin whole or broken so long aloud—his or the other's."

He answered me slowly:

"We do not love him. But we do not plot his dcath. He goes his way unharmed by us. We are gentlemen, not bravos."

"And I wee?"

this house with my skin whole or broken so long aloud—his or the other's."

as I left on my own feet. But you have mentioned "Well," I said crossly, "you have kept me the very reason why I shall not betray you. I do waiting already more time than I care to lose, not love you and I do not love Lucas. Therefore How much longer before you will tell me what I if you and M. Lucas are to fight I ask nothing came to know?"

efter than to help the quarrel on." "Lucas is my cousin's enemy, and, being a great man's man, skulks behind the bars of the Hotel ment than nught else, but Yeux-gris's ready Quentin and will not face my cousin's sword. laughter rang out.

to reach him takes a little plotting. Do you I looked into his gray eyes, that had flashed so enemies to exterminate each other. And I asked "How came you into this business of the could not but believe enemies to exterminate each other." hotly in my defense, and I could not but believe you to be my valet!" "Which do you wish to see slain?" demanded the black Gorvals.

I answered quite truthfully: "And could not be disloyal to save your life?" Yeux-gris cried out at once: "My life! Monsieur, the Broux would not seek "Brayo, Felix, you are a "My life! Monsieur, the Broux would not seek "Bravo, Felix, you are a paragon! I have not to save their souls if M. le Due preferred them wit enough to know whether you are as simple as

sunshine or as deep as a well, but I love you."
"Monsieur." I answered, as I think very neatly, I expected he would rebuke me for the outburst, "if I am a well truth lies at the bottom.
"Well, Gervals?" demanded Yeux-gris.

"Oh, Lucas!" I said. 'I know hothing of the same with the duke since my time. I do not owe him anything save a grudge for that blow this morning. Mon dieu, monsleur, I am thankful villain turn honest nor honest man false in one to you for befriending me. Dying for monsleur is short hour. When he was asked to serve against to you for befriending me. Dying for monsleur is short hour. When he was asked to serve against But he promised me ten pistoles." "Aye, I would trust him. For never yet did the stepped forward menacingly; so did I. He llain turn honest nor honest man false in Out. this morning. Mon dieu, monsieur, I am thankful villain turn house no.

to you for befriending me. Dying for monsieur is short hour. When he was asked to serve against all in a day's work; we expect to do that. But, the duke he showed his stuff. He was no traitor; "He did not give them to me," I said. "Permy faith, if I had died just now it would have he was no coward; he was no liar. I think he is not those row."

not those row."

"He did not give them to me," I said. "Permy faith, if I had died just now it would have he was no coward; he was no liar. I think he is not those row."

"He did not give them to me," I said. "Permy faith, if I had died just now it would have he was no coward; he was no liar. I think he is not so convinced of my honesty. He will doubtless pay you afterward."

Gervais bent his lowering brows on his cousin,

Do as you like Yeux-gris said at once to me:

The wretch scrambled shakily to his feet and stood clutching the door jamb and cyling Gervais, there was more than terror in his face; there was the look you see in the eyes of a trapped ani.

This Lucas, as I told you, is too cowardly to him. I have not seen or heard of any money."

Martin edged up close to the door of retreat and waxed defaut.

Without two or three of the duke's guards about without two or three of the duke's guards about him. Therefore we have the right to get at him was the look you see in the eyes of a trapped ani.

The wretch scrambled shakily to his feet and "This Lucas, as I told you, is too cowardly to him. I have not seen or heard of any money."

Martin edged up close to the door of retreat and waxed defaut.

"Then all I have to say is, he may go whistle him. Therefore we have the right to get at him for his news." mai that watches its chance to bite. Your as we can: We have paid a man in the house to Now, had I but thought of it, here was an easy tell of his movements. He is to fare out secretly road out of a bad business. If Martin would not at night on a mission for M. le Duc, with one tell the hour of rendezvous Lucas was saved, "Because the moment he is clear of the house that little journey."

"Very good, monsleur. And I?" Aye. But you cannot trust the oath of such as the expedition. Last night when he told us of the turned directly: plan it had not been decided."

"As
"Then he will be the other man I saw in the sword.

But I will not have Felix Broux suffer because he dared speak for the Duke of St. Quentin."

"As you choose, then. I will not touch a hair of his head if you keep him from Lucas."

Once more he turned away across the room. My

"What would you? We must send.

"As you send if you send window? I shall know him."

"You have sharp eyes and a sharp brain, youngseeming to be balancing considerations. Then he seized the man can say you come from the shuttered house in taking in the situation. Then he seized the man can say you come from the shuttered house in the thinks I can be slighted and robbed of my